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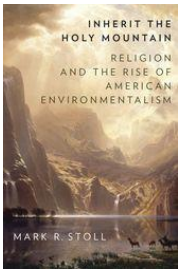
Inherit the Holy Mountain: Religion and the Rise of American Environmentalism

Stoll, Mark R.



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Stoll, Mark R. *Inherit the Holy Mountain: Religion and the Rise of American Environmentalism*. New York Oxford University Press, 2015.

Religion has profoundly influenced the origins, evolution, and future of American environmentalism. Born of the house of Calvin, environmentalism took its program and acquired its moral power from the (originally) Calvinist denominations Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. Virtually all its founders in the nineteenth century were within a generation of a Congregationalist church. Presbyterian Progressives made conservation, parks, and forests into national causes. Lapsed Presbyterians led environmentalism's postwar rise. In recent decades other denominations, notably Baptists, Catholics, and Jews, have taken over environmental leadership. As each denomination strut its hour upon the environmental stage and exited to make room for the next, environmentalism's character and goals changed. This book explains why this is so, and what it means. Using biography and the histories of religion, environmentalism, art, and culture as tools, the book recreates the mental and moral world that gave birth to the movements to conserve, preserve, and enjoy nature and to protect the environment. Through works of such artists as Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, Ansel Adams, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Leo Twiggs, it explores the

landscapes of the mind of different religious traditions. It reveals how religious upbringing left its distinctive imprint on the life, work, and activism of a wide range of environmental figures: George Perkins Marsh, Frederick Law Olmsted, John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, Alice Hamilton, Rachel Carson, Jane Jacobs, David Brower, Edward Abbey, E. O. Wilson, Wendell Berry, Michael Pollan, and others. Finally, the book examines the contemporary religious scene and its implications for a future environmentalism. (Source: Oxford Scholarship Online)

Mark R. Stoll is a professor of history at Texas Tech University and a former fellow at the Rachel Carson Center.

Chapter 5 of *Inherit the Holy Mountain*, "Progressive Presbyterian Conservation," is available for download here .

Related links:

- Mark Stoll's website
  https://www.markstoll.net/
- Book profile at Oxford Scholarship Online
  http://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190230869.001.0001
- *Religion and Place*, an *Arcadia* collection
  http://www.environmentandsociety.org/arcadia/collection/17897

Websites linked in this text:

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